

Pre-Heber
History of
People in Provo, Utah
preparing to come
to Timpanogas
Valley

*Provo Utah Preparation
Period - to settle
Provo River Valley*

PROVO'S TWO TABERNACLES

And the People Who Built Them

by

N. LA VERL CHRISTENSEN

A history of the present Provo Tabernacle (built as the Utah Stake Tabernacle) and the pioneer-era Provo Meeting House, often called the Old Tabernacle. Also glimpses of the early history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Utah Valley.

Photos courtesy of Joseph M. Boel, Ephraim Hatch, The Daily Herald, Brigham Young University, Walter G. and John W. (Bun) Taylor collection, O. Blaine Larson, John B. Fairbanks, A. W. and Bernice Adamson, and others.

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On February 6 the General Assembly of the territory granted Provo a charter modeled after that at Nauvoo, which provided for a city council consisting of a mayor, four aldermen and nine councilors. In April the first council was elected, with Ellis Eames as mayor.¹⁶

INDIAN TROUBLES: THE PROVO WALL

At the beginning of 1851, Provo had several hundred residents, for whom two forts were inadequate. When the survey for the new town was completed, the settlers began to build on their lots, confident in their safety despite troublesome Indians.

Indian troubles continued. In the spring of 1854, during the "Walker War," named for a hostile Ute chief, Provo's pioneers started a project to "wall" part of the city. Specifications called for the barrier to be 12 to 14 feet high, 4 to 6 feet wide at the base and tapering to a width of two feet at the top. An 18-inch layer of rock was to provide a foundation.

Historian J. M. Jensen recounted that the wall was to extend from Sixth South to Fifth North and from Seventh West to University Avenue. For military defense, port holes were built into the wall.

Each man was assigned to build a segment of the wall. Some complied energetically and completed their quotas; others defaulted in part or altogether. Work on the wall continued off and on for about two years during which the west and south sides and part of the north side were pretty well completed. But the barrier was never continuous, and, according to one aged pioneer, never did extend east of Fifth West, which was then Main Street.¹⁷

Jensen says some Indians were puzzled by the wall and called it a threat to their peaceful pursuits. Chief Walker finally said if the colonists would cease building walls the Indians would quit fighting. He probably had in mind other areas of the state also, since Provo was not the only city to be walled.

¹⁶ Provo, Pioneer Mormon City, p. 63.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 78.

EARLY-DAY MEETING PLACES

From the start, the Mormon settlers held religious services at Fort Utah. These and other gatherings -- including recreational events and political meetings -- were held either in private log houses or out of doors.

During a mid-September, 1849, visit by the First Presidency of the Church (consisting of Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Willard Richards), a Sunday meeting was held outside "in the shade."

The next night a meeting to discuss colonization of the regions to the south was held "by candle light" in "Captain Hunt's House" and, at 9:00 P.M., a dance was commenced "at Bishop Higbee's house."¹⁸

When Fort Utah's second enclosure was built in 1850, a sizeable schoolhouse was constructed in its interior. This then served as the principal meeting place and recreation center. As the pioneer civilization began to spread across the city plat and fan out to the farming areas, religious services were held in boweries, private homes, early-day schools, and ward buildings. The Cluff Hall in northeast Provo was the scene of many gatherings for a period of years. Ultimate construction of the Provo Meeting House or Old Tabernacle (see Chapter III) gave the settlers a good place in which to hold major church and community meetings.

FORMATION OF STAKE IN UTAH COUNTY

Utah Stake (called Provo Stake at first), the third stake of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints formed in Utah, encompassed all of Utah County for fifty years and even reached into the present Wasatch County for a while, that area being part of Utah County for a time.¹⁹ President Brigham Young presided over the formation of the stake on March 19, 1851 at a meeting in the schoolhouse within the second fort. Only Salt Lake Stake, organized October 3, 1847, and Weber Stake, January 26, 1851, predated Utah Stake.

Actually, eleven other stakes, all in the Midwest, were formed earlier than those in Utah. These were discontinued when the Saints came west. Kirtland was the first stake, February 17, 1834; followed by Clay-Caldwell, July 3, 1834; Adam-ondi-Ahman, June 28, 1838; Nauvoo, October 5, 1839; Zarahemla, October 5, 1839; Lima, October 22, 1840;

¹⁸ "Utah Stake Historical Record", notes of Thomas Bullock, early-day clerk to LDS First Presidency.

¹⁹ History of YWMTA in Utah Stake, 1972, compiled by Helen Adele Durrant Sovine and LaRue Baldwin Smith, pp. 2 and 8, quoting Encyclopedic History of Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, by Andrew Jenson.

Quincy, October 25, 1840; Mount Hope, October 27, 1840; Freedom, October 27, 1840; Geneva, November 1, 1840; and Springfield, November 5, 1840.²⁰

Heber C. Kimball, Parley P. Pratt and others joined President Young in the delegation of church authorities which came to Fort Utah to form the stake organization. They crossed the Provo River "on the new bridge and arrived at the home of Bishop Higbee in the fort about 3 p.m."²¹

At 7 p.m. the Fort Utah Saints gathered in the school house. After addresses by Presidents Young and Kimball and others, Isaac Higbee was "elected" as the first president of the stake which was to consist of "all the Saints residing in Utah County where six settlements already had been founded besides Fort Utah -- namely, Evansville (Lehi), American Fork, Pleasant Grove, Springville, Spanish Fork and Peteetneet (Payson)."

President Higbee nominated John Blackburn as first counselor and Thomas Willis as second counselor. Elias H. Blackburn was chosen as bishop of Provo, with William Young, first counselor, and Harlow Redfield, second counselor. The first High Council was organized as follows: Asahel Perry, Thomas Guyman, Aaron Johnson, William Miller, Peter W. Connover, William Pace, Alexander Williams, John Banks, Samuel Clark, James Ivie, James A. Smith, and David Canfield.

The meeting "continued until after 10 p.m. when the Saints were dismissed with benediction by Heber C. Kimball. The company retired to Alexander Williams' home for the night."²²

On March 20, President Young ordained the various officers sustained the previous night. He, Kimball, and Pratt addressed the brethren on their duties. Shortly before 1 p.m. the president and his party proceeded to Springville to organize the ward there.

The new stake quickly expanded. Santaquin established a branch in 1851, Palmyra, a ward on December 21, 1851, and Mountainville (now Alpine), a branch on February 10, 1852.²³

A "Provo Valley Branch" consisting of settlements in Heber, Midway, Charleston and Wallsburg was organized in 1859 with Abraham Hatch as

1860 — Jos. Stacy Murdock

²⁰ Smith, op. cit., p. 714.

²¹ "Utah Stake Historical Record."

²² Ibid.

²³ History of YWMA in Utah Stake, p. 1.; Manuscript History of Utah Stake beginnings.

presiding elder. This area became part of Wasatch County when it was organized in 1862. On July 15, 1877, Wasatch Stake was organized with *Abram* Hatch as president.²⁴

Under the new organizational setup, Provo had dual leadership, with President Higbee exercising authority in spiritual matters and Bishop Blackburn in temporal affairs, according to Memories That Live (p. 64).

{Note: Although the stake was organized March 19, 1851, the new name "Utah Stake" appears not to have been specifically applied until a few years later. Church historical records in those early years referred to the organization as Provo Stake. In some instances the minutes simply mentioned "the stake," "the Branch in Utah County," or the "stake of Zion in Utah Valley." The first mention of "Utah Stake" which this writer found in the early records was in Journal History of the Church for July 15, 1855, when the name appeared as "Utah (Provo) Stake."}

Elias H. Blackburn, the new bishop of Provo, was born September 17, 1827, in Bradford County, Pennsylvania, and baptized in April 1845. At Nauvoo he assisted in completing the Temple. In 1846, he took part in the exodus from Nauvoo. He witnessed the formation of the Mormon Battalion. He spent the winter of 1846-47 aiding families in the emigration. He crossed the plains in 1849 in William Hyde's company and located in Provo that fall. He was ordained a high priest and bishop by Brigham Young; helped the Saints to endure many hardships and troubles with the Indians in early years; recalled that wheat was \$5.00 a bushel, so scarce was that commodity at one time. In 1855, sugar climbed to \$1.00 a pound, according to his writings.

APOSTLE CALLED TO PRESIDE

On July 17-18, 1852, the stake presidency was reorganized and bishops were chosen for the four original wards to be established in Provo. This took place at a conference "in the bowery" at Provo with Brigham Young presiding. "Nominated and sustained" as the stake presidency²⁵ were:

Apostle George A. Smith, president

Isaac Higbee, first counselor

²⁴ History of YWMIA in Utah Stake, p. 8.

²⁵ "Utah Stake Historical Record."

1

THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

WASHINGTON, D. C.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

WASHINGTON, D. C.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

Dominicus Carter, second counselor.

The following men were sustained as bishops of the four Provo wards:

First Ward, Jonathan O. Duke

Second Ward, James Bird

Third Ward, Elias H. Blackburn

Fourth Ward, William M. Wall.

George A. Smith, chosen to serve as the second presiding officer or stake president of the stake in Utah County, later served as first counselor to Brigham Young in the First Presidency 1868-75. He was born June 26, 1817, in Potsdam, New York; baptized, September 10, 1832. He moved to Kirtland in May, 1833; quarried and hauled rock for the Kirtland Temple; was ordained an apostle April 26, 1839, at age 21. Smith took part in the councils after the martyrdom of his cousin, the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1844. He labored on the Nauvoo Temple. A member of the first company of pioneers which arrived in Utah in July 1847, he was active in the Church's colonization program. In 1854, he was elected Church historian and recorder. He was a member of the bar of the Supreme Court of the Territory of Utah, and a delegate to the constitutional convention. He helped establish the provisional government in the state and served as a member of the first and several succeeding legislatures. 2.

Apostle Smith, under whose direction the first effort was made to build a Provo Meeting House or Tabernacle (See Chapter III), presided over affairs in Utah Valley for nearly two years.

The death of Willard Richards, second counselor to President Brigham Young, March 11, 1854, influenced a change in the Utah County leadership. On April 7 of that year, George A. Smith was sustained as Church historian and recorder, a post Elder Richards had held as a member of the First Presidency. (Jedediah M. Grant was named second counselor to President Young that same day.)²⁶ When Elder Smith left Utah Valley, Isaac Higbee took over again as President, becoming the only man in the stake's history to serve two separate tenures at the head of the organization. 3.

At a conference in Salt Lake City, April 6, 1855, it was voted to release President Higbee and appoint James C. Snow to fill the office as the stake's fourth president. But it was not until July 15 that the reorganization actually was effected. This was done at a conference in Provo attended by Brigham Young and other leading officials of the Church. The new presidency was as follows:

²⁶ Smith, op. cit., pages 491 and 713.

Provo Preparations

James C. Snow, president.

4.

Dominicus Carter, first counselor.

James N. Jones, second counselor.

James C. Snow was born January 11, 1817, in Chesterfield, New Hampshire. He was baptized October 19, 1833. He received his patriarchal blessing in Kirtland Temple under the hands of Joseph Smith, Sr. On May 17, 1844, he began a special mission to electioneer in behalf of the candidacy of the Prophet Joseph Smith for the presidency of the United States; was present at the meeting when the mantle of Joseph Smith fell upon Brigham Young -- an event to which he often testified; left Nauvoo for Salt Lake Valley in 1846; remained at Council Bluffs until 1852; and arrived in Salt Lake City October 9, 1852. He moved to Provo later in the fall. A member of the Utah Legislature in 1856; U.S. deputy marshal; elected Utah County surveyor in 1858 and re-elected in 1860. He moved to Southern Utah in 1868, and died at Pettyville, April 30, 1884.

When President Snow resigned in 1858, his first counselor, Dominicus Carter, became the fifth president of Utah Stake (acting).

5.

William Miller was appointed as sixth president of Utah Stake and "presiding bishop of all the settlements in Utah County," July 17, 1860. When the reorganization was completed, the presidency was as follows:

6.

William Miller, president.

George W. Bean, first counselor.

Isaac Bullock, second counselor.

William Miller was born February 8, 1814, at Avon, New York. He started for Kirtland, Ohio, October 12, 1834; remained there three weeks conversing with the Prophet Joseph Smith and other Church leaders; was baptized October 28, 1834. Miller attended the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. He moved with the Saints to Far West, Missouri; was on constant duty during the mobbings and persecutions. He moved to Nauvoo in 1841, and remained there five years, being present when the corner and cap stones of the Nauvoo Temple were laid. He left Nauvoo in May 1846; arrived in Salt Lake City, September 20, 1849. Early in February, 1850, he came to Provo and shared the experience of the Indian difficulties. He was a member of the Legislature. Miller built the first adobe house in Springville. In 1853, he was appointed counselor to Bishop Aaron Johnson of

Springville. He served a mission to England in 1856. The Old Tabernacle was completed during his tenure as Utah Stake president. Probate judge, merchant, farmer, stockraiser, and churchman, he also served as Provo mayor 1864-67. He died August 7, 1875, in Provo.

MILLER FOILS BRIGHAM'S PURSUERS

On December 23, 1845 -- a year and a half after the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith -- William Miller figured in an exceedingly interesting strategem that foiled anti-Mormon officers and mobsters who were seeking to take Brigham Young into custody and bring embarrassment to the Church.

Young, then president of the Council of Twelve, was in the Nauvoo Temple with other apostles when Almon W. Babbitt entered and reported some federal officers from Springfield, accompanied by several of the state troops, were lurking outside intending to arrest some of the Twelve, especially Young and Amasa M. Lyman. The posse was intending to search the Temple, he said.

Relating the incident later, President Young said he quickly prayed for guidance, then called upon Miller, who was in the Temple, and outlined his plan. (Note: Miller was 13 years younger than Brigham Young, being only 31 at the time. Later in life he was described as being of portly stature.)

George D. Grant, the president's coachman, went below and drove Brigham's carriage up to the doors as if waiting for him to come down. The story continues in President Young's own writing, quoted here from Journal History for December 23, 1845:

William Miller put on my cap and Brother (Heber C.) Kimball's cloak and went downstairs, meeting the marshal and his assistants at the door.

As he was about to get into my carriage, the marshal arrested him on a writ from the U.S. Court, charging him with counterfeiting the coin of the United States. Miller told him there must be some mistake about it, as he was not guilty of anything of the kind, but the marshal insisted it was right.

Miller desired the marshal to go down to the Mansion where he could get counsel and ascertain if the proceedings were legal. On reaching the Mansion they went into a private room where Esq. Edmonds examined the writ and pronounced it legal. Miller gave Edmonds the names of four witnesses to subpoena for him, and asked the marshal to remain until the morning. He consented, but soon got uneasy

and said he must go to Carthage. Miller then enquired if he would wait three quarters of an hour, until he could get his witnesses, but in 15 minutes he said he must go, and would wait no longer.

Miller got into his carriage. Esq. Edmonds rode with the marshal's guard and they started for Carthage, Miller protesting there was some mistake about it, for he certainly was not guilty of any such things as were charged in the writ.

On the way to Carthage the marshal was very sociable and remarked that the people had got quite a joke upon him for letting Turley give him the dodge. As they approached Carthage the troops began to whoop and holler and went into town in high glee, performing the journey, which was 18 miles, in two hours.

The marshal put up at Hamilton's tavern, and the rumor soon spread through the town that Brigham Young was in the custody of the marshal at Hamilton's. Among others, George W. Thatcher, county commissioner's clerk, who was well-acquainted with Miller, came into the tavern to see me.

The marshal at his request took Miller into a private room. After a little conversation one of the guards came in and the marshal went out. The marshal soon returned and said to Miller: "I am informed you are not Mr. Young."

"Ah," exclaimed Miller, "then if I should prove not to be Mr. Young it would be a worse joke on you than the Turley affair." He replied: "I'll be damned if it won't."

The marshal asked Miller if his name was Young. He answered, "I never told you my name was Young, did I?"

"No," replied the marshal, "but one of my men professed to be acquainted with Mr. Young and pointed you out to me to be him."

William Backenstos was called in and he told them William Miller was not Brigham Young. Another man came in and said he could swear Miller was not Brigham Young. The marshal said he was sorry and asked Miller his name. He replied, "It is William Miller."

The marshal left the room and soon returned, accompanied by Edmonds, who was laughing heartily at him. Edmonds enquired if he had anything more to do with Mr. Young. The marshal replied that he did not know that he had anything further to do with Mr. Miller.

The conclusion of the incident is told in Documentary History 1845:311 as follows:

President Brigham Young met with the Twelve in prayer and thanked the Lord for deliverance from the snares of their enemies. At 8:20 President Young left the Temple disguised and shortly after Brothers Heber C. Kimball, Parley P. Pratt, George A. Smith and Amasa M. Lyman left to elude the vexatious writs of the persecutors. . . .

The Documentary History 1845:312 adds:

"William Miller remained the . . . night at Carthage at Jacob Backenstos's house. Miller said he could not sleep, being interrupted by Edmonds' continued roars of laughter at the marshal's discomfiture. Miller saw two of the marshal's guards, one of whom threatened his life. Miller came to Nauvoo with the stage; the driver told him that the officers said it would be like searching for a needle in a hay mow to undertake to find Brigham Young in Nauvoo.

ABRAHAM O. SMOOT ENTERS SCENE

The seventh president of the Utah Stake was Abraham O. Smoot. He was sustained as both "bishop of Provo City" and president of the stake, February 9, 1868, in the Old Tabernacle with President Young and many other Church dignitaries present.²⁷ The new stake presidency consisted of:

Abraham O. Smoot, president.

William Miller, first counselor.

Elijah F. Sheets, second counselor.

High Councilmen sustained at that time were Aaron Johnson, S. P. Curtis, John Leatham, R. K. Bullock, John H. Carter, Joseph Clark, James E. Daniels, L. John Nuttall, William A. Pollett, William O. Sperry, Millen Packard, and Lyman S. Wood.

Abraham Owen Smoot was born February 17, 1815, in Owenton, Kentucky. He was baptized in Benton County, Tennessee at age 20. He traveled with Wilford Woodruff in affairs of the Church and with him joined the Saints in Kirtland in 1836. Smoot was imprisoned following a defense of Far West, Missouri when it was attacked by a mob. He

²⁷ "Utah Stake Historical Record."

served on the High Council in Iowa, as president of the Keokuk Branch, and as a missionary in Tennessee and Alabama. On the trek from Nauvoo to the West he was captain of one of the companies and a bishop over families of Mormon Battalion men. He was the first justice of the peace in the Territory of Utah. Smoot was called on a mission to England in 1851, and led the first company of Saints to Utah under the Perpetual Emigration Fund. He served ten years as the mayor of Salt Lake City. Called by Brigham Young in 1868 to provide leadership in Provo, he immediately was elected mayor and held office twelve years without pay. He was a leading businessman; president of the original trustees of Brigham Young Academy, and champion and benefactor of the school during its first 20 years; and a member of Utah Legislature.

Two new counselors to President Smoot and a number of new high councilmen were sustained in a partial reorganization, June 4, 1877. William Miller had died nearly two years before and Elijah Sheets was returning to Salt Lake City, having moved to Provo at the time Smoot was installed. The new counselors were:

David John, first counselor.

Harvey H. Cluff, second counselor.

President Brigham Young was present for the reorganization. It was the last conference he attended in Provo. He died August 29, 1877.

On January 15, 1893, Edward Partridge was sustained as second counselor in the stake presidency to succeed Harvey H. Cluff, who had been called to preside over the Hawaiian colony in Skull Valley, Tooele County.

Abraham O. Smoot died March 6, 1895, after a twenty-seven year tenure as stake president -- longer than any other man has served.

President Wilford Woodruff and counselors George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith attended quarterly conference in Provo April 21, 1895, and reorganized the stake presidency as follows:

Edward Partridge, sustained as eighth president of the stake.

David John, retained as first counselor.

Reed Smoot, second counselor.

Edward Partridge was born June 25, 1833, at Independence, Jackson County, Missouri. His father, Edward Partridge, was the first bishop of the Church. The earliest recollections of President Partridge were the mobbings of Saints in Missouri. He was only six years old when his father died at age 46, May 27, 1840, in Nauvoo. A sister, 19 had preceded



George A. Smith



Abraham O. Smoot



Ellis Eames



Edward Partridge

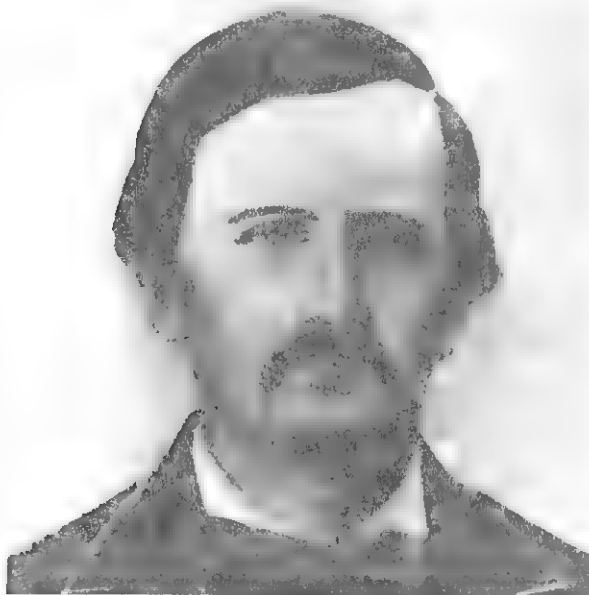
Here are four of the early-day stalwarts who provided inspirational leadership in shaping ecclesiastical and temporal policies. Apostle George A. Smith was called to serve the dual role of Utah Stake president for nearly two years beginning in July 1852. He launched the original effort (later cancelled mostly because of Indian troubles) to build the Meeting House. Abraham O. Smoot, stake president for twenty-seven years and long-time mayor, spearheaded the Utah Stake Tabernacle project. Ellis Eames became Provo's first mayor in 1851. Edward Partridge, son of the earlier Edward Partridge who was first Bishop of the Church, succeeded Smoot as stake president when the latter died in 1895. Under his direction the Tabernacle was completed and dedicated in 1898.



George A. Smith



Abraham O. Smoot



Ellis Eames



Edward Partridge

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her father to the grave by eleven days. "They were victims of the Missouri persecutions, and were among those who suffered privations and exposure in the mobbings and expulsion in the winter of 1838-39."²⁸ Edward Partridge came to Utah with his mother and others of the family in 1849. He married Sarah Lucretia Clayton, daughter of William Clayton. They moved south at the time of the "move" in 1858. He was a member of the High Council of Salt Lake Stake; bishop of Fillmore; and counselor to President Hinckley of Millard Stake. He filled a mission to the Sandwich Islands and served as president of the mission. Returning to Utah, he located at Provo, and was appointed to the Utah Stake High Council before being named to the stake presidency.

Stephen L. Chipman succeeded Reed Smoot as second counselor in the stake presidency at quarterly conference, April 15, 1900. The previous week, April 8, Smoot had been ordained an apostle of the Church by then President Lorenzo Snow.

FIRST DIVISION OF UTAH STAKE

As the year 1901 dawned and Utah Stake was nearing its 50th anniversary, the growing stake consisted of thirty-three wards and two branches, and still covered the entire valley. The stake had no president, Edward Partridge having passed away, November 17, 1900. Stake affairs were now presided over by David John and Stephen L. Chipman, the counselors.

Reorganization and division of the stake took place at quarterly conference, January 13, 1901, attended by Joseph F. Smith of the first presidency and several apostles, including Reed Smoot. At that time Utah Stake was divided into three stakes.

The central part -- consisting of four Provo wards, Lake View, Pleasant View, four Springville wards, Mapleton, Timpanogos, Vineyard, and Pleasant Valley Wards -- was to continue as Utah Stake, with the following men sustained as the presidency:

David John, ninth president of the stake.

Joseph B. Keeler, first counselor.

Lafayette Holbrook, second counselor.

²⁸ Smith, Essentials in Church History, p. 8. (Note: Most pioneer-era biographical material is from Andrew Jenson's LDS Biographical Encyclopedia. Information on modern-day presidents was obtained in personal interviews.)

The north part of the county was organized into a new stake called Alpine, with Stephen L. Chipman as president, and James H. Clarke and Abel John Evans as counselors.

Nebo Stake was partly organized for the south part of the county, with Jonathan S. Page Jr. as president.

David John was born January 29, 1833, in Pembrokeshire, Wales. He came from a family of ministers. Baptized in 1847, he held high positions in the Church in the British Isles. He sailed for the United States April 6, 1861; arrived in Salt Lake City, September 13, 1861. He settled in Utah County and served as a school teacher, businessman, and church leader. He was counselor to Bishops William G. Nuttall and Myron Tanner in the Third Ward, and superintendent of the Utah Stake Sunday Schools for 28 years. In 1872, he was made president of the High Priests Quorum of the stake.

On April 19, 1908, David John was honorably released because of his advanced years and failing health. The stake presidency was reorganized as follows:

Joseph B. Keeler, tenth president of Utah Stake.

Lafayette Holbrook, first counselor.

J. William Knight, second counselor.

Joseph B. Keeler was born September 8, 1855, in Salt Lake City. He served as superintendent of religion classes in Utah Stake and assisted in organizing the first religion classes in the Church. Keeler was ordained bishop of the Provo Fourth Ward, January 13, 1895. He left that position in 1901 to become first counselor to President David John in the stake presidency. One of the original twenty-nine students at Brigham Young Academy, he served with the faculty of that institution.

At stake conference, October 29, 1911, Holbrook was released as first counselor since he was moving from the stake. J. William Knight was sustained as first counselor, and Amos N. Merrill as second counselor.

President Keeler was honorably released October 26, 1919, with the stake presidency reorganized as follows:

Thomas N. Taylor, sustained as the eleventh president.

J. William Knight, first counselor.

Simon P. Eggertsen, second counselor.

Thomas N. Taylor, a prominent Provo businessman, was born July 28, 1868. He was manager (in one title or another) of Taylor Brothers, Inc. for about 65 years. He served as president of the Farmers and Merchants Bank and president of the Utah Bankers Association. Taylor was mayor of Provo for two terms, 1900-03, and the Democratic nominee for governor in 1920. For 20 years he served as chairman of the board of trustees of Brigham Young University. During his 20-year tenure as bishop of the Provo Third Ward both the ward chapel and recreation hall were built. His tenure as president of Utah Stake was exceeded only by that of Abraham O. Smoot. He died October 24, 1950.

KOLOB. SHARON STAKES ORGANIZED

Utah Stake was divided for the second time at quarterly conference, November 23, 1924. The four Springville wards, Mapleton, Thistle, and Soldier Summit were separated and organized as the Kolob Stake.

In line with the population increase and the policy of the Church for smaller units, Utah Stake again was divided September 14-15, 1929. The northern part -- including Pleasant View, Grand View, Lake View, Edgemont, Timpanogos, Vineyard, and Sharon Wards, with a combined Church population of 3022 -- was organized as the Sharon Stake, leaving Utah Stake with the following wards: Provo First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Bonneville, Pioneer, and Manavu Wards, with a combined church population of 9,207 members.

The Utah Stake presidency remained the same during these changes.

However, at quarterly conference, September 2-3, 1933, Knight was released as first counselor in the presidency, having been appointed a member of the Stake Tax Commission. Eggertsen was released as second counselor and sustained as a patriarch.

Thomas N. Taylor continued as stake president. Sustained as his new counselors were:

Christen Jensen, first counselor.

W. Monroe Paxman, second counselor.

PROVO DIVIDED INTO TWO STAKES

Utah Stake, now encompassing only Provo, entered the year 1939 with a church population of nearly 10,500. As a prelude to another division of the stake and reorganization of the stake presidency, priesthood leaders met Sunday, February 12, and worked out a basis for the division.

On Sunday, February 19, President Taylor and Counselors Jensen and Paxman were released, with Joseph Fielding Smith of the Council of the Twelve Apostles officiating.

The two new stake presidencies were sustained as follows:

Utah Stake:

Royal J. Murdock, twelfth president of the stake. 12

Herald R. Clark, First Counselor.

Leon Newren, second counselor.

Provo Stake:

Charles E. Rowan Jr., president

Andrew Jensen, first counselor.

Antone K. Romney, second counselor.

Royal J. Murdock was born in Charleston, Wasatch County, April 19, 1885. He was dean of Provo bishops at the time of the stake presidency reorganization, having served as a bishop of the Provo Fourth Ward for fourteen years. Prior to that he was counselor in the bishopric for a number of years. After serving briefly as bookkeeper at the Knight Woolen Mills and teaching bookkeeping at BYU, he became secretary of the Provo Reservoir Company and allied firms. He was identified with irrigation development most of his life. He served as stake president until his release October 21, 1945. An active Democrat, he was elected a Utah County Commissioner and served three terms in that post. He died May 2, 1955.

Charles E. Rowan Jr., a native of Southern Utah, was the first president of Garfield Stake and later served as the first president of the Texas Mission of the Church. His third "first" came in being sustained president of the newly-formed Provo Stake. Earlier he had served as Sunday School Superintendent and a Utah Stake high councilman. In his occupation he was with the Federal Land Bank and in real estate work.

Utah Stake, with its new boundaries, encompassed the five wards west of University Avenue -- Second, Third, Fourth, Sixth, and Pioneer -- with a combined membership of 5,696.

The new Provo Stake comprised the four wards east of the Avenue -- First, Fifth, Bonneville, and Manavu. Its combined membership totaled 4,746.

Utah Stake's next presidency reorganization took place at quarterly conference in the Tabernacle, October 21, 1945. President Murdock and Counselors Clark and Newren were released. New leaders sustained were:

Victor J. Bird, thirteenth president of the stake.

John F. Mower, first counselor.

Dr. Da Costa Clark, second counselor.

Like President Murdock before him, Victor J. Bird served as bishop of the Provo Fourth Ward before being called into stake leadership. He was sustained as bishop on March 12, 1939, and was not released from that post until nearly five weeks after being named stake president. He was born June 5, 1894, in London and immigrated to Salt Lake City with his parents after they had joined the Church in 1896. Coming to Provo as a young man, he was office manager at the Knight Woolen Mills before his August 11, 1932 appointment as assistant cashier for Farmers and Merchants Bank. By steps he became cashier, vice president, and president. After the November, 1955, merger with Walker Bank, he was Walker's vice-president in charge of Provo operations until retirement in February, 1966. He served six years as stake Sunday School superintendent when the stake covered all territory from Pleasant Grove to Soldier Summit. He was ordained a stake patriarch at BYU on May 3, 1964, and still serves in that capacity.

In a partial reorganization of the Utah Stake presidency, Fred L. Markham was named second counselor, succeeding Dr. Da Costa Clark, on August 18, 1946.

EAST PROVO, OREM STAKES CREATED

Provo and Utah Valley continued to grow and the Church prospered. Wards were divided, new stakes formed, chapels and stake centers built.

With Apostle John A. Widtsoe officiating, Provo Stake was divided April 13, 1947, creating East Provo Stake. The new stake included the Bonneville, Eighth, and Ninth Wards with a membership of 4,081. Ninth Ward was to be divided into two or three wards. A ward or branch was to be organized on the BYU Campus of Wymount Village residents. And a small area was to be annexed from the Pleasant View Ward.

Provo Stake kept the west and southern sectors of the stake, including Manavu, Fifth, First, Seventh, and Tenth Wards -- 3,900 members. President Charles E. Rowan Jr. continued to head Provo Stake. Lee Valentine and Orrin H. Jackson were sustained as his first and second counselors.

Golden L. Woolf was installed as president of the new East Provo Stake, With Hilton A. Robertson and Leland M. Perry as first and second counselors.

Also on April 13, 1947, Orem Stake was created in a division of Sharon Stake under direction of Apostles Ezra Taft Benson and Mark E. Petersen. Sharon Stake kept the southern area comprising wards of Lake View, Grand View, Timpanogos, Pleasant View and Edgemont with a membership of 3,443.

The five northern wards -- Vineyard, Geneva, Sharon, Windsor and Vermont -- were assigned to the new Orem Stake.

Henry D. Taylor continued as president of Sharon Stake, with William C. Faulkner and Philo T. Edwards as first and second counselors.

Orem Stake sustained Walter T. Holdaway as its president. Carlyle E. Bunker and M. Dover Hunt were counselors. The new stake's membership was 3,440. Both stakes met in the Scera Auditorium.

LAST DIVISION OF UTAH STAKE

Utah Stake, which once had covered all of Utah Valley and extended into the present Wasatch County, was divided for the last time at quarterly conference, May 4, 1947, at the Tabernacle. Apostle Joseph F. Merrill conducted the conference, assisted by Clifford E. Young, assistant to the Twelve.

In that division, West Utah Stake was created.

Victor J. Bird was retained as president of Utah Stake. First Counselor John F. Mower was released since he planned to move into a new home in the east part of the city. Fred L. Markham, previously second counselor, was sustained as first counselor, and Terry J. Oldroyd, high councilman and former Sixth Ward bishop, was appointed second counselor.

J. Earl Lewis, high councilman and former bishop of the Second Ward, was sustained as president of the new West Utah Stake. James F. Paramore was named his first counselor and Leonard R. Braithwaite, second counselor.

In the alignment of wards, Third, Fourth, Sixth, University, and Park comprised Utah Stake. West Utah Stake was made up of the Second, Eleventh, Rivergrove, Pioneer, and Sunset Wards.

President Bird was released after 15 years of service at quarterly conference, November 27, 1960, along with his counselors. Apostle Harold B. Lee officiated at the reorganization. The following were sustained as the new Utah Stake presidency:

Fred L. Markham, fourteenth president of the Utah stake. 14

Rulen B. Hansen, first counselor.

Harold B. Jones, second counselor.

President Markham was born in Spanish Fork, July 3, 1902. He attended the Provo schools and graduated from Brigham Young University. He received his training in architecture at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Long active in Church leadership, he helped organize the Utah Stake Mission and served three years as its president. He was a member of the Third Ward Bishopric and the Utah Stake High Council before being called as a counselor in the stake presidency. Altogether he served 27 years in the presidency, 13 of them as president. Markham is a former president of the National Architectural Accrediting Board. He also served as chairman of the National Council of Architects Registration Boards and was president of the BYU Alumni Association. Among his professional accomplishments, he was chairman of architects for the Washington Temple and planned 38 of the buildings on the BYU campus either by himself or in association with another architect, including the Wilkinson Center, Family Living Center, Eyring Science Building, and Joseph Smith Building.

The second counselor in the Markham presidency, Harold B. Jones, moved from the stake in 1961. Ralph A. Britsch, previously a high councilman and former bishop of the Park Ward, was sustained in the position at quarterly conference November 26. President Britsch was released September 12, 1968. Ross B. Denham, high councilman and former bishop of the University Ward, succeeded him.

With population expansion in West Utah Stake and declining membership in Utah Stake, partly due to business district encroachment, it became necessary to realign the boundaries between the two stakes. For this purpose and to reorganize the leadership, a two-stake conference was held September 9, 1973 in the BYU Fieldhouse. The boundary readjustment to divide the membership more evenly was accomplished by (1) transferring Rivergrove First, Second and Third Wards and Pioneer and Pioneer Second Wards from West Utah to Utah Stake; and (2) shifting the Sixth and Fourteenth Wards from Utah to West Utah Stake.

President Markham of Utah Stake and his counselors were released at that conference, presided over by Apostle Howard W. Hunter. Sustained as the new presidency were:

Ross B. Denham, fifteenth president of the stake 15

Louis W. Bandle, first counselor.

N. La Verl Christensen, second counselor.

President Ross B. Denham was born September 18, 1918 in Iola, Kansas. He earned a masters degree from Brigham Young University and pursued a career in education. He was an elementary school teacher and principal in Provo, serving also as assistant principal at Provo High School. Denham capped his career as an educator by serving 14 years as assistant superintendent of Provo City Schools. After retirement, he was elected for a four-year term on the State Board of Education. Called to leadership in many positions in the Church, he served 10 years as bishop of the University Ward and five years as counselor. He also served three years on the stake high council and five years in the stake presidency before being sustained as stake president. Denham was called to be a regional representative before being released as Utah Stake president May 16, 1982, after nearly nine years in that calling.

West Utah Stake made some changes in its stake presidency at the same joint conference September 9, 1973 in which President Denham was installed. Walter A. Hansen continued as president. Louis W. Bandle was released as first counselor to be appointed to the same position in Utah Stake. To fill the West Utah Stake vacancy, Merrill W. Cox was advanced from second to first counselor. Royden R. Shurtz was sustained as new second counselor.

Under the new alignment, the boundary between the two stakes is Center Street extending west to the railroad tracks. Utah Stake occupies the north sector and West Utah Stake the south plus the territory west of the river and tracks.

President Denham's second counselor, N. La Verl Christensen, was released May 12, 1974 and Harold R. Laycock, bishop of the Park Ward, became the new second counselor.

On July 27, 1975, the Fourth and University Wards were recombined as the Fourth Ward as they had been aligned before a 1945 division. Both wards had been shrinking in size because of business development and other factors. The combined ward shares the chapel at First West and Eighth North with the Park Ward. The historic Fourth Ward Chapel at 396 North 100 West, built in 1917-24, was sold and is being shared by two BYU wards and a private school.

During President Denham's tenure, a stake center was built; it houses the Pioneer Second and Rivergrove Third Wards. Later a new chapel was built to house the Third and Pioneer First Wards. The latter building also serves as the home for the newly organized Provo 38th Ward for single persons. The Provo 33rd Ward, formerly the Spanish-American Branch, shares the Rivergrove Chapel with the Rivergrove First and Second Wards.

Dr. J. Alan Thomas, a former bishop of the Park Ward, succeeded President Denham as stake president in a reorganization at the Provo Tabernacle, May 16, 1982. Enoc Q. Flores was sustained as first counselor and Randy G. Turner as second counselor, succeeding Louis W. Bandle and Harold R. Laycock, respectively.

NAME CHANGES: HERITAGE REMAINS

Utah Stake, the third stake organized after the Saints migrated to the Rocky Mountains, gave up its name on February 1, 1974, when a new church-wide stake and mission re-naming program went into effect, identifying each by its location.

Under the change, Utah Stake became Provo Utah Central Stake. But the parent stake in Utah Valley did not lose its heritage. "Provo Central" preserves the tie as well as the history and traditions of the remnant stake.

As a reminder of the heritage, a brief history and a splendid display of pictures of the 15 presidents who have headed Utah Stake and Provo Utah Central Stake was prepared under the direction of President Denham and appears in the High Council Room of the new Stake Center at Fifth North and Twelfth West.

All of the other stakes also had their names revised to indicate the general location to Latter-day Saints across the world. For example, East Provo Stake became Provo Utah East Stake, with the name of the state inserted.



William Miller



David John

Two of the prominent early Provo and Utah Stake leaders were William Miller and David John. Miller was named in July 1860 as stake president and "presiding bishop of all the settlements in Utah County." He also served for a time as Provo mayor and was instrumental in completing the Meeting House (Old Tabernacle). Miller figured in the storied "Bogus Brigham" incident that foiled anti-Mormon elements trying to arrest President Young in Nauvoo. David John was a counselor to president A. O. Smoot for many years and had a special fund-raising assignment for the present Tabernacle. He himself served as stake president from 1901 to 1908.

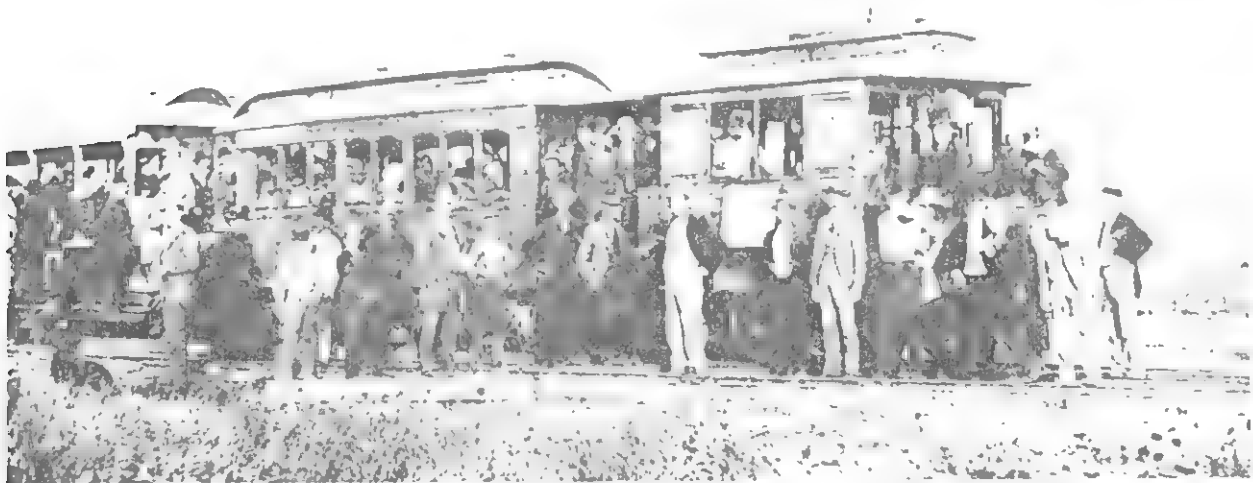
These pictures of Isaac and John S. Higbee are small but the brothers were big in deeds. Both were bishops in Nauvoo before the Saints came west. John was called as "president and bishop of the Provo Branch" to direct the first company of pioneer colonizers into Utah Valley in 1849. Isaac, first counselor, became leader when John S. was released to join his family in Salt Lake City and later to serve a mission in Britain as president of the Newcastle Division. Isaac was sustained as first president of Utah Stake and held the post two separate terms.



Isaac Higbee



John S. Higbee



In the early 1890's recreation lovers found fun and relaxation at a resort and dance hall on the shores of Utah Lake. How did they get there? Mostly, for a time, via the Provo City Railway. This picture portrays one such excursion. The city railway system of that period operated only two or three years.



William Miller



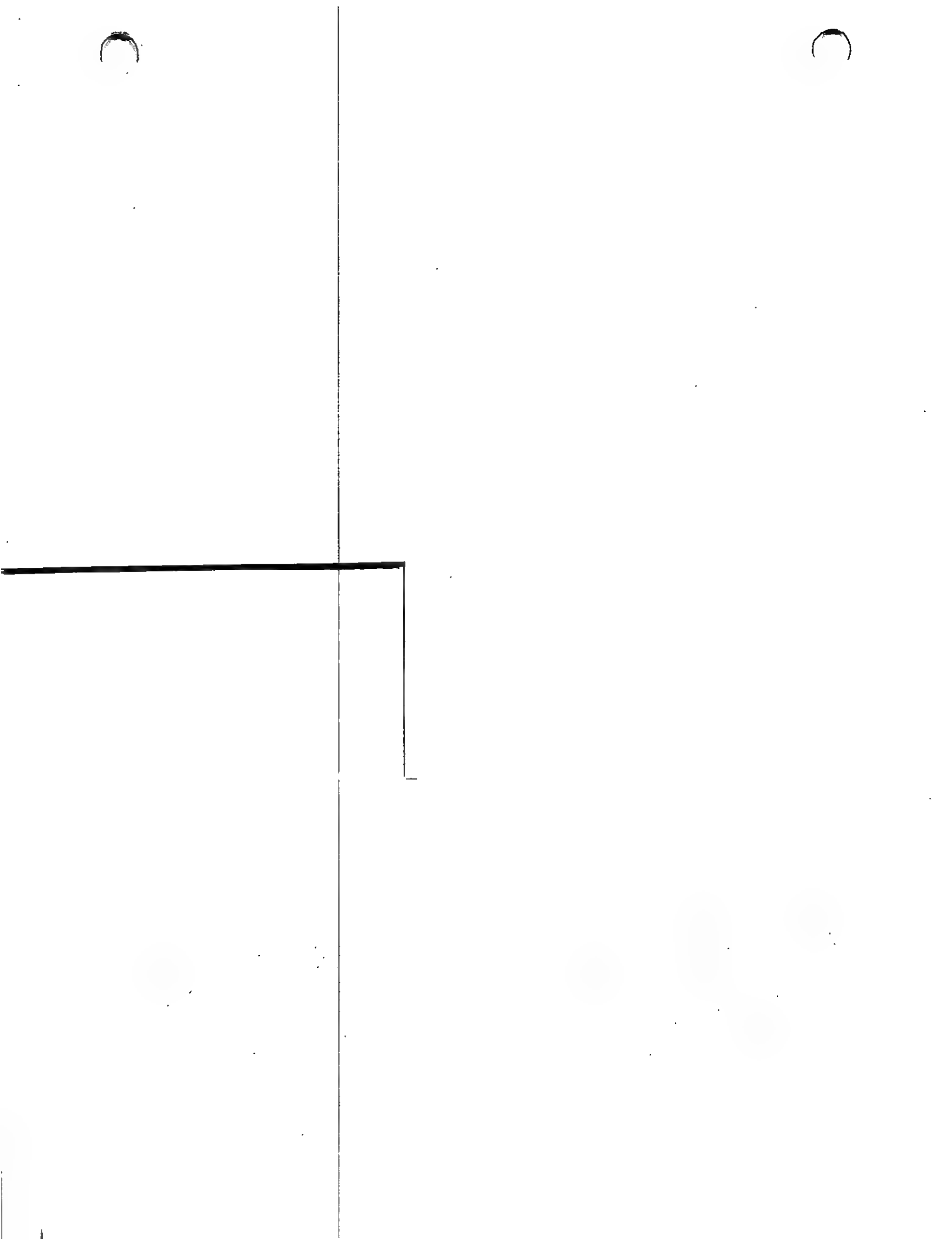
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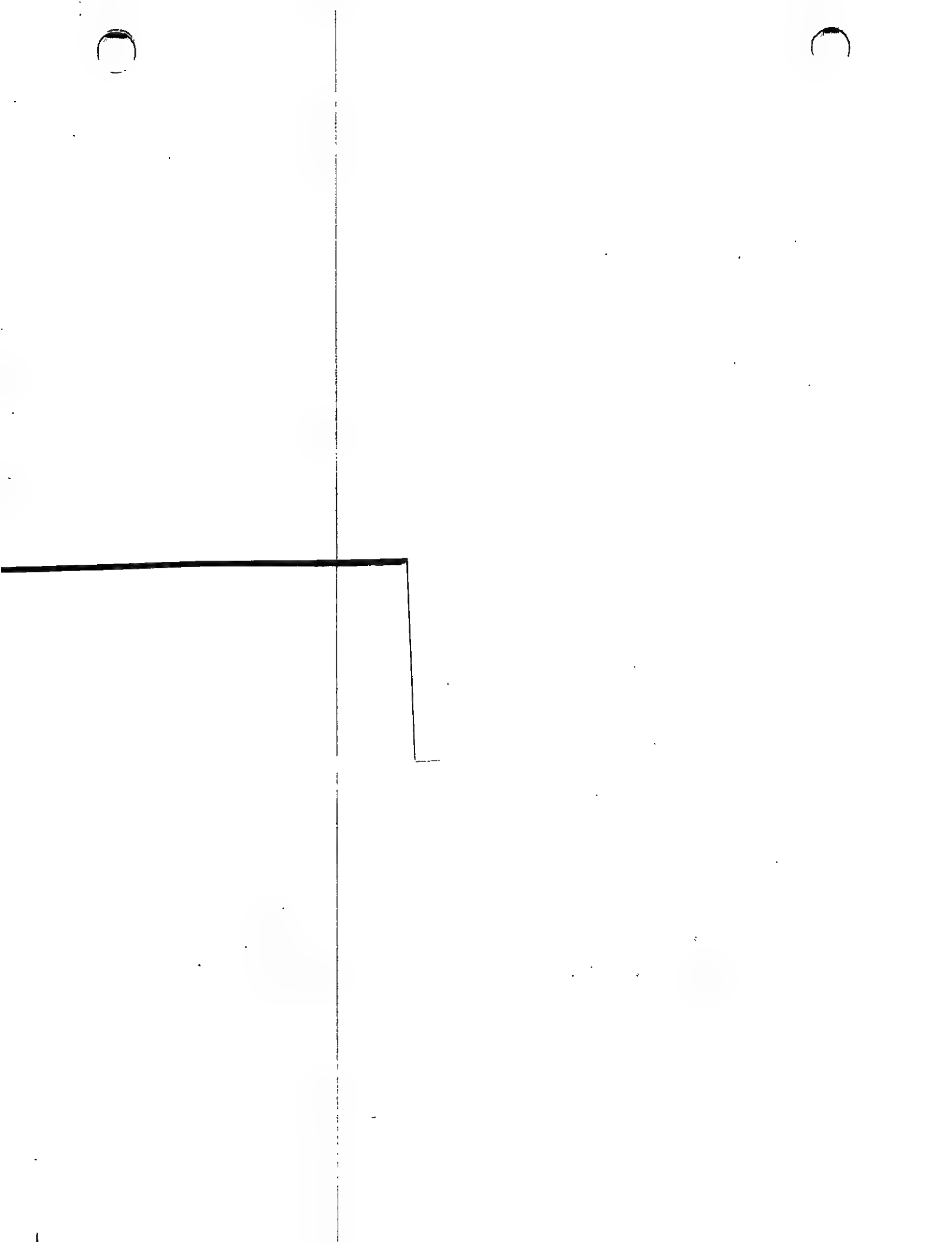
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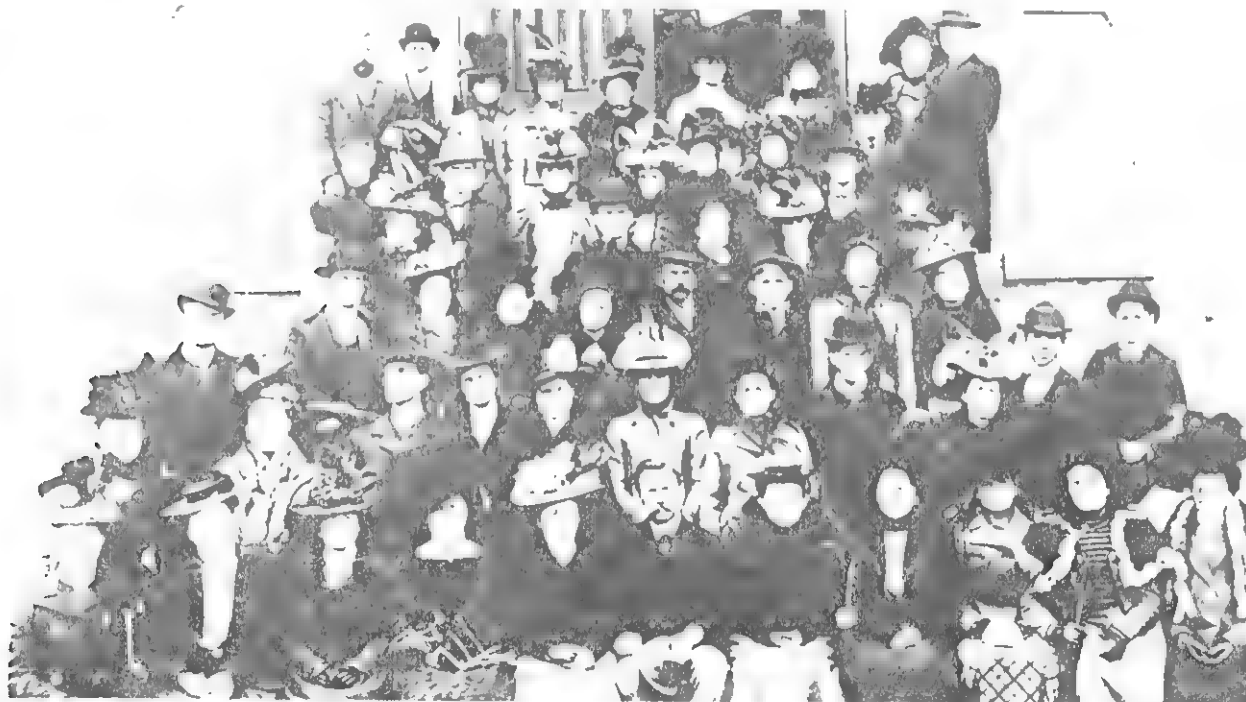
Provo Meeting House's setting in relation to business district is shown in this rooftop dimension. Note the two chimneys and the tower, ever resplendent at any angle for that period of time.



Utah Stake had its own Tabernacle Choir; it sang at the dedication of the Meeting House August 24, 1867, under Conductor James E. Daniels. This picture, however, was taken in 1902 on the steps of the present Provo Tabernacle. J. R. Boshard was the choir leader then.



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Like many other important temporal projects and policies, the Provo Woolen Mills, shown above, had their beginnings in Priesthood discussions in the Old Provo Tabernacle. Hard times hit the mill in the early 1900's. After 1910 the factory was reincorporated as the Knight Woolen Mills by Jesse Knight and other interests. Despite valiant efforts, the industry never reached its former heights after a disastrous fire in 1918. The mill finally closed in 1932.



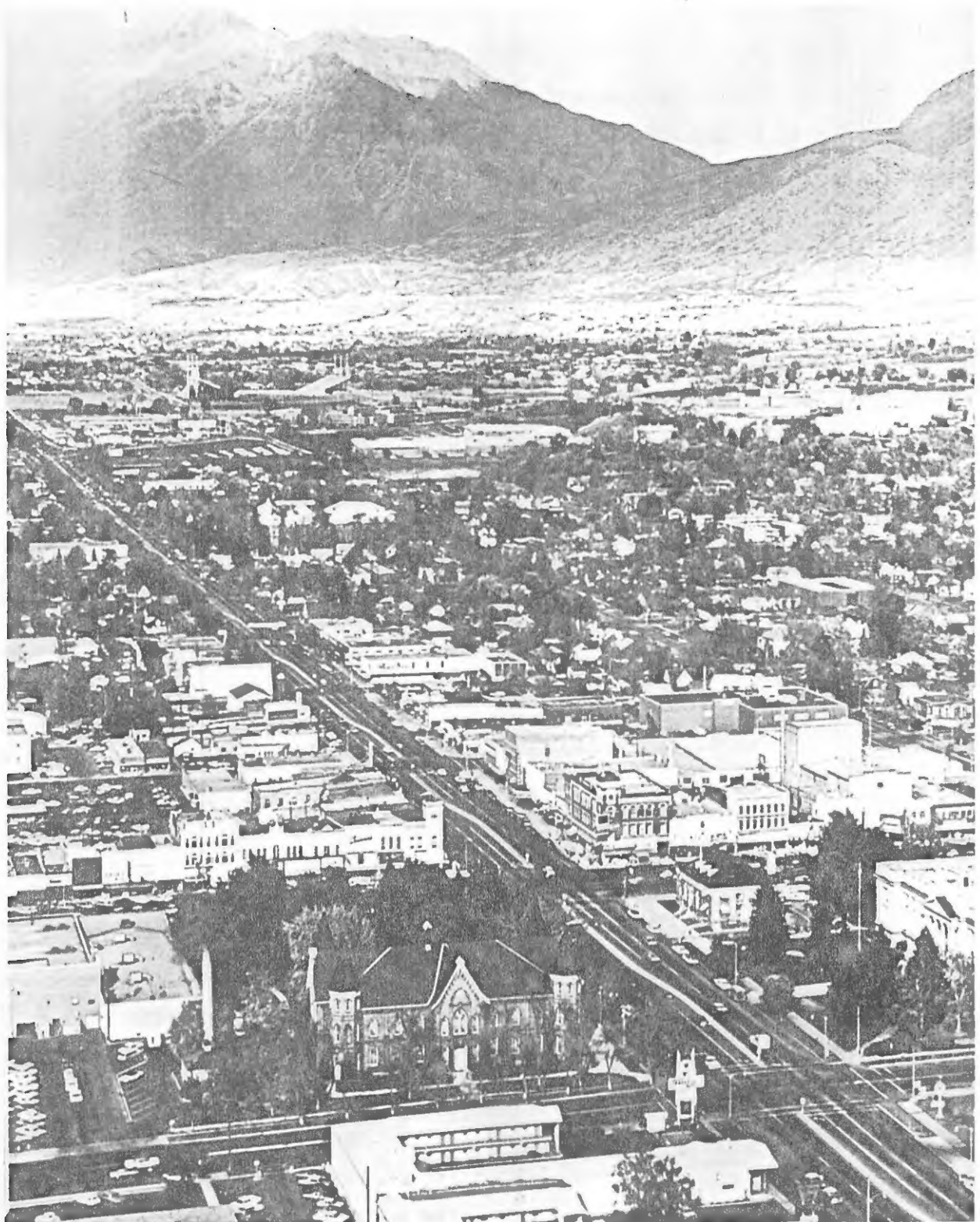
This early-day photo of the Provo Fourth Ward Relief Society probably didn't have much to do with either Tabernacle, although Priesthood discussions supportive of women's suffrage were mentioned in the minutes as early as 1870. The picture gives an idea of what the well-dressed Relief Society ladies wore in the period near the turn of the century.



You can pick out many items of interest in this intriguing photo: The "Old Tabernacle" at right; horse-drawn vehicles; towers of the old Fire Hall and the County Court House of that era in the block east of the tabernacle; and, of course, utility poles along the middle of Center Street as well as the south side. The old Deseret Telegraph came to Provo in either 1867 or 1868. The telephone made its appearance in 1887, but electric service didn't come until 1890.



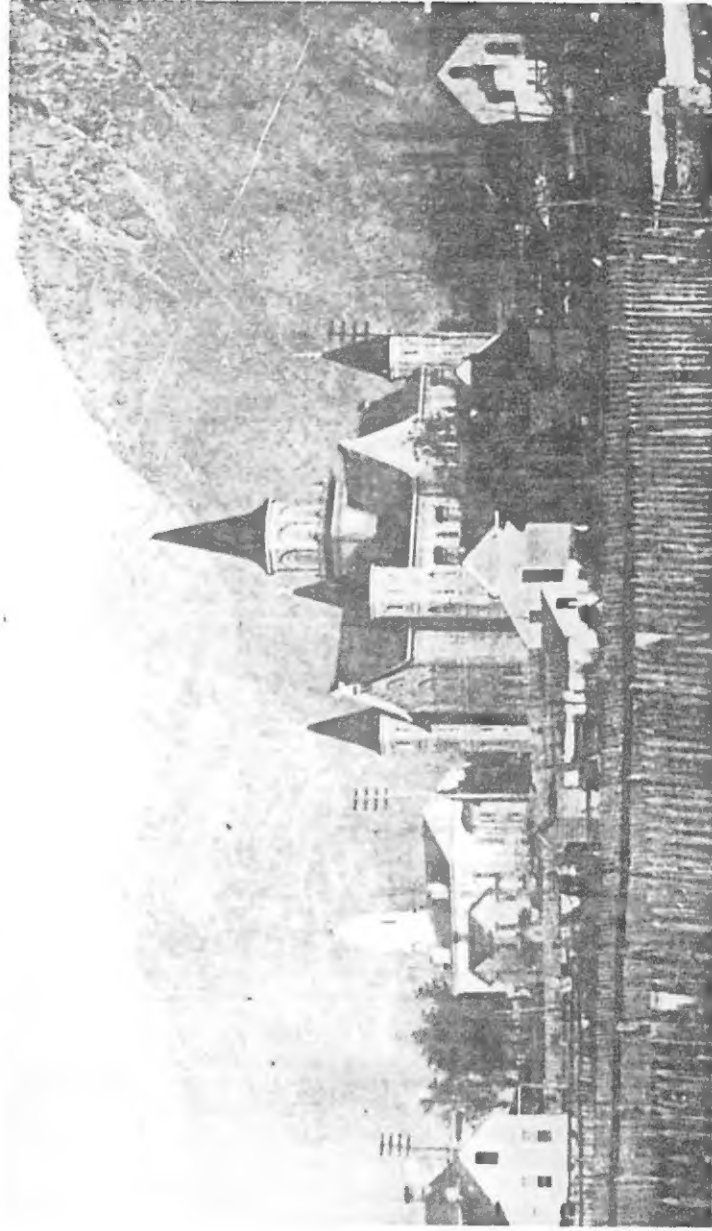
Looking northeasterly, this air view of several years ago shows the historic Tabernacle (foreground) as a dominating aesthetic landmark in the heart of Provo. Across University Avenue to the east is the County Building, while across First South is the Travelodge where once had stood the part-time residence and office of Brigham Young.



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Pioneer artist and photographer John B. Fairbanks took this picture of the "bank corner" and extending west along the north side of Center Street, across the street from the Tabernacle Block. Note the horse-drawn delivery conveyance in the 1897 photo.



The imposing Tabernacle Block scene was all the more impressive because of nearby small homes, and other unpretentious surroundings in that early pioneer period.



William Harrison Folsom



Harvey Harris Cluff



John Peter Rasmus Johnson



James Clark Snyder

William H. Folsom, colorful pioneer-day leader and architect for the LDS Church, designed the Provo Tabernacle as well as many other important Utah edifices such as the Manti and St. George Temples. Harvey Harris Cluff, John Peter Rasmus Johnson and James Clark Snyder comprised the three-man Tabernacle building committee from 1882 to 1892, when they were released and succeeded by a new committee. Cluff served as chairman. All three were prominent builders and leaders in the community